



NOTES FROM THE:

Professional Military Comptroller School

by Colonel D. Mack Foster

This is my swan song as the Director of the best comptroller schoolhouse in the nation. For the past two years, I've had the distinct honor of working with an array of distinguished guest speakers, a dedicated faculty, and the PMCS students who are the centerpiece of our program. Without question, this has been a most rewarding experience. We use our space in The Air Force Comptroller magazine to tell you about our school and why we believe your attendance is important. This article continues that recommendation because now, more than ever, the DoD requires the best talent to ensure the success of tomorrow's defense. I'd like to take a few moments to discuss why you should come to PMCS and some course highlights. When you have been around as long as I have, you can appreciate the wisdom of Henry Kissinger and Bernard Brodie when they spoke of deterrence. Our adversaries respect our strength as a nation and in my opinion, the objective of comptrollership is to ensure we get the maximum output per dollar invested, be it flying hours, ship steaming hours or tank miles. More and more, the decision-makers will look to you—the financial expert—for recommendations to sustain the mission at minimum cost. Professional continuing education like PMCS will hone your skills and broaden your perspectives.

As you are aware, our new Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) published a 10 February memorandum to senior comptrollers on the importance of professional development for comptroller personnel. He cited Secretary Cohen's Defense Reform Initiatives and the efforts within the DoD financial management community to streamline support activities—in essence, as we get smaller, we must be smarter. To ensure success, the financial community will depend on the quality of our financial services and the credibility we bring to the table. Having professional standing, degrees and a broad educational background make us valuable team players—PMCS can benefit you. Additionally, the American Council on Education validates the quality of our program by recommending six graduate credit hours for PMCS attendance.

We are often asked the question (by those who have not been here), why invest six weeks away from my duties? What is the payoff? Both supervisor and postgraduate surveys confirm that we prepare individuals who are already experts in their functional area for senior positions by expanding their knowledge of resource allocation and its direct impact on military readiness. PMCS is

unmatched in delivering professional continuing education for financial professionals in the Army, Navy, Air Force, and other DoD agencies. This year marks our 30th anniversary and we are proud that generals, admirals, and members of the senior executive service can say PMCS was important to their success. We seek civilians in grades GS-12 to GS-15 and field grade officers for our six-week program. Our job is not just keeping ledgers, using calculators, and computers; our job is the same as the operator—balancing mission readiness and weapon system sustainment with planning for the future. Sounds a bit like mom and apple pie, but if you believe what we do matters, you owe it to yourself to be the very best financial professional you can be. We can help.

Over the course of six weeks at PMCS, our students hear from a cadre of 60 distinguished guest speakers, the majority of whom are flag/general officers or civilian equivalent, and offer a dimension that cannot be replicated elsewhere. We augment these speakers with our own faculty who offer a cross-section of functional expertise and provide preparatory lectures to level the playing field before our guest speakers arrive. One of the major learning environments is the seminar forum. Just think, you will share experiences with twelve other professionals, all of whom have unique service, functional area, and educational backgrounds. You'll also get the opportunity to participate in an exercise in national budget priorities. This capstone exercise allows participants to make national level decisions on resource allocation in the foreign and domestic environments. Suffice it to say, I think PMCS is important and I want you to share the experience.

I want to thank Majors Pam Singleton and Rod Trojanowski for their contributions to the PMCS team. Pam is retiring and Rod is PCSing to SOCOM. Both officers were key players in the revision of our curriculum and the recent renovation of our facilities—great officers and best of luck to both of them.

Finally, I thank Mr Hale and our senior officers for allowing me the privilege of serving at our premier school. Col Charles W. Martin will take over as the school's director and I wish him the very best. Also, to our distinguished guest speakers, thanks for the continued support which you recognize as an investment in the future. Without question, I will miss the close, professional relationships we forged at the schoolhouse. I am richer for having known the hundreds of students who are now PMCS alumni.